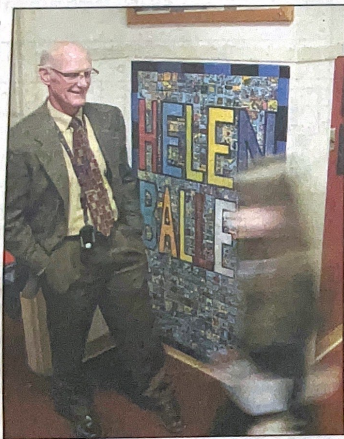


Jerry Moss, Helen Baller Elementary School principal, stands in front of the school's greeting tile mosaic. The artwork will be moved and installed the new Helen Baller school.



HOWARD BUCK/The Columbian

## Helen Baller alumni invited to say farewell

By HOWARD BUCK  
Columbian staff writer

CAMAS — Thousands of students have passed through the colorful hallways of Helen Baller Elementary School since it was built in 1947.

Anyone with fond memories or close ties — students, parents, teachers and others — is invited to a farewell open house Saturday. The building is being razed in favor of a new, replacement Helen Baller school under construction next door.

The event will be 11 a.m. to 3 p.m. An overhead "community photo" of guests is set for 1 p.m. outside Helen Baller's front door, 1954 Garfield St.

Guests are invited to poke around old classrooms, student art-filled hallways and other haunts. They're even

welcome to scribble farewell messages on walls, ceilings and floors.

Refreshments will be available.

"It's an opportunity to get a final goodbye," said Jerry Moss, Helen Baller principal. "There's always nostalgia. A lot of people come through here and say, 'This is my classroom.'"

Some nice touches of the old building will survive. A bright tile mosaic will be pried from the current lobby wall and installed near the new school's office. Some locally made Hildén bricks that line the original building walls will reappear, Moss said.

One beloved feature to stay put when the old Helen Baller is knocked down to make way for a new play area and soccer field: the stately row of maple trees that line Garfield Street,

Moss said.

About 500 students will launch the \$15.5 million, two-story Helen Baller school in September. It has more than twice the space and a 21st century electrical grid the old building lacks, Moss said.

He'll serve one year in the new school before he retires, he said.

Camas' new, \$17 million Grass Valley Elementary School also is due to open in September. Taxpayers approved a \$90 million bond measure in February 2007 to pay for construction.

Also due by 2010: Conversion of James D. Zellerbach Elementary School into a district office complex, and construction of a new Hayes Freedom High School building on the current district office site.